

ANTHROPOMORPHIC AND ZOOMORPHIC MAORI BOWLS FROM HAURAKI AND THE BAY OF PLENTY

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Abstract. A group of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic bowls are described and relationships suggested among them.

Zoomorphic Bowls

No. 45316 (Figs. 1, 2, 3) represents a portion of a wooden bowl from Ongare Point near Katikati on the Tauranga Harbour. This bowl was found during draining operations on a small swamp on Mr D. Earl's property at Ongare Point at grid reference NZMS1 N53 part 54/448820. The swampy area lies immediately below and around a small spur running out from higher ground. There is evidence of house terraces and filled pits on the spur covering an area of about a quarter of an acre. There are no discernible fortifications.

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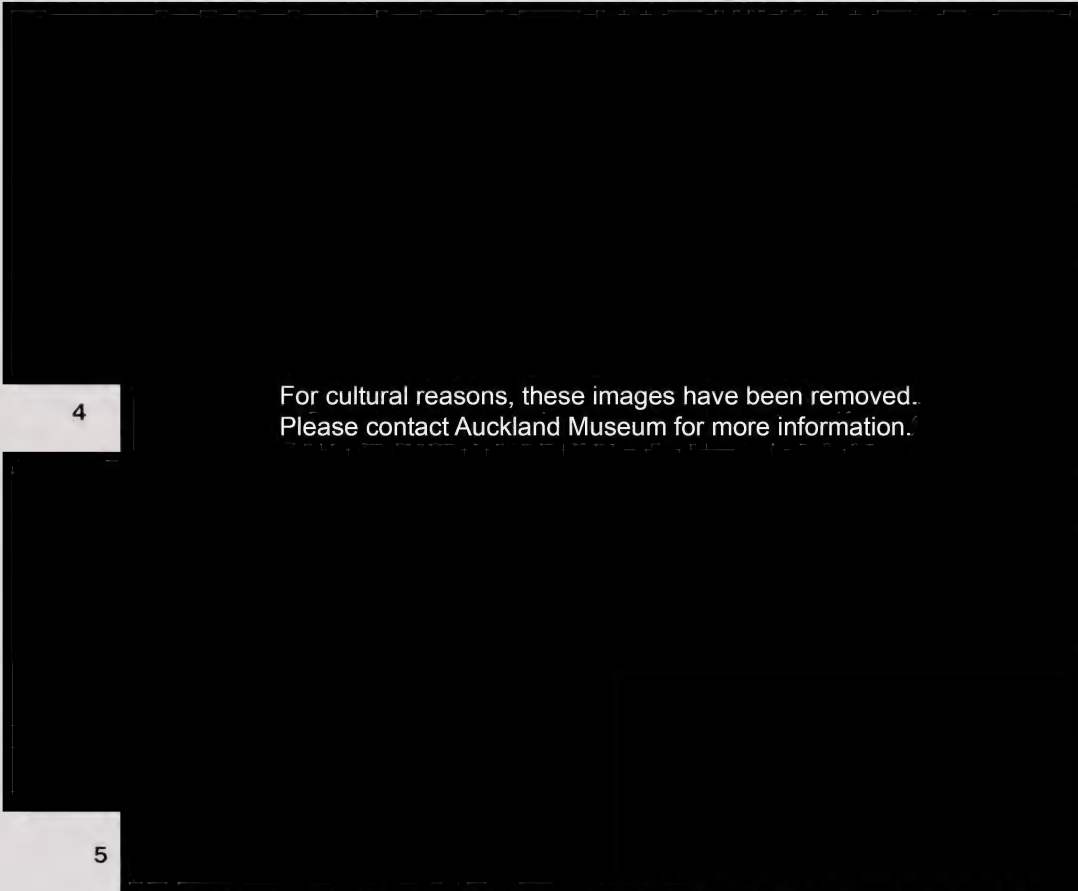
Figs. 1-3. 45316 Length 48cm. Ongare Pt. Dep. D. Earl. 1. Top view with side reconstructed. 2. Side view showing leg. 3. Detail of head.

The head fragment was initially noted by Wilson in 1962, in a memoir of the Whakatane Historical Society, at about the time it was handed over to Mr W. Ambrose, who was then engaged in excavations of a nearby pa at Kauri Point. Since that time it has been in the Anthropology Department at the University of Auckland. A recent find in the same area is part of the same bowl. These pieces have now been assembled in the Auckland Museum.

This bowl is unique in that its form is undoubtedly zoomorphic with a head which appears to be that of a bird. When found, the lower jaw or beak was still present, but this has since gone. Its rim form and geometric designs possess a very Polynesian appearance.

Associated with this bowl, was a godstick head with multiple eyebrows, which appears to be a local version of a Rarotongan *Tangaroa* figure (see Simmons, this volume).

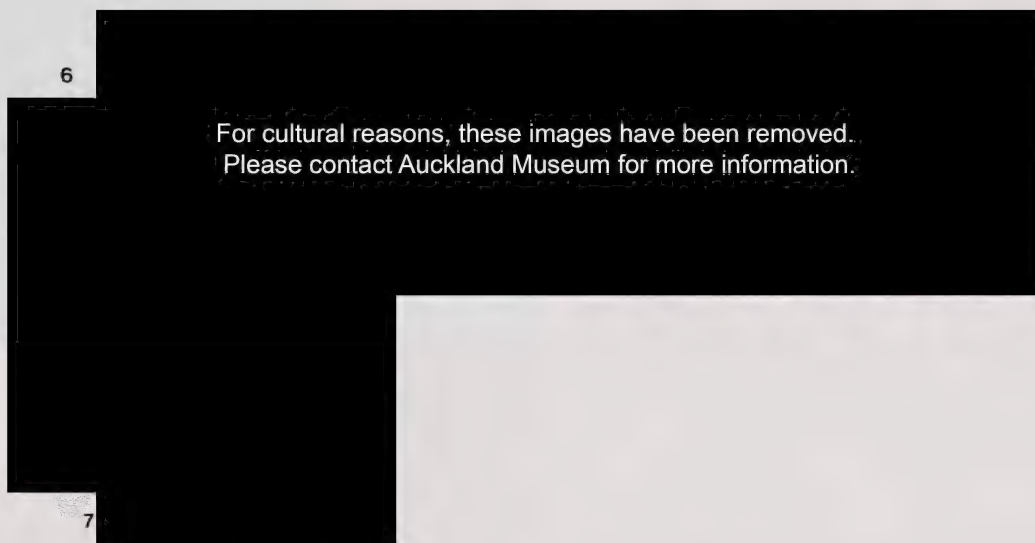
No. 14015 (Figs. 4, 5) represents an unfinished bowl found by A. F. Allen on Motiti Island off Tauranga, not far from the first bowl. This bowl is 50cm long and has a bird shape body with a keeled neck leading to the head. The four legs would appear to be of a type similar to the one on the bowl from Ongare Point.



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Figs. 4, 5. 14015 Length 50cm. Width 22cm. Motiti Is. Pres. Mrs A. F. Allen.
4. Side view. 5. Top view.

No. 45313 (Figs. 6, 7) is a beautifully finished bowl from Mangatarata, Hauraki Plains. It was found in 1971 by Bernard Harris in a small swamp below a pa at NZMS N52/882079. It is remarkable for two characteristics, the overall bird shape of the body in profile and a simple human head. Despite the latter, the bird image is reinforced by the tail-like handle and the positioning of the head.



Figs. 6, 7. 45313 Length 73.5cm. Mangatarata. Purch. E. E. Vaile. 6. Side view.
7. Detail of head.

No. 1197 (Figs. 8, 9) represents an unfinished bowl with four loop type feet from Awaiti Stream, Hauraki Plains. This bowl, of possible zoomorphic shape, was illustrated by Stevenson in 1939 (see his Fig. 16).

No. 4869 (Figs. 10, 11) is a pouring bowl from Kerepehi on the Hauraki Plains. While of fairly typical shape, the head on the handle and the presence of notching along the rim of this well finished bowl are both very different from most late examples of bowls. Also the keeled eyes of the head and its general form strongly suggest zoomorphic rather than human characteristics.

No. 44626 (Fig. 12) found at Kawakawa Bay by Mr G. Ryburn, is a large (125cm long) trough-like bowl with a well finished rectangular shape, internally and externally, and a flat bottom. At the rear, level with the rim, is a flat projection ornamented with carving. Part of this projection has broken off. Two holes have been pierced through this projection possibly for suspension. At the front the bowl is prolonged into an inclined pouring spout ornamented with carving. The underneath of this spout has been made into a human face with the nose on the underside and the tip of the spout projecting as a tongue. The carving is typical of the Hauraki style. The tail-like projection at the back and the anthropomorphic spout would suggest a relationship with 45313 from Mangatarata, though in this case body shape suggests neither an animal or human form.



Figs. 8, 9. 1197 Length 68cm. Width 19cm. Pres. H. Wood. 8. Bottom view.
9. Side view.

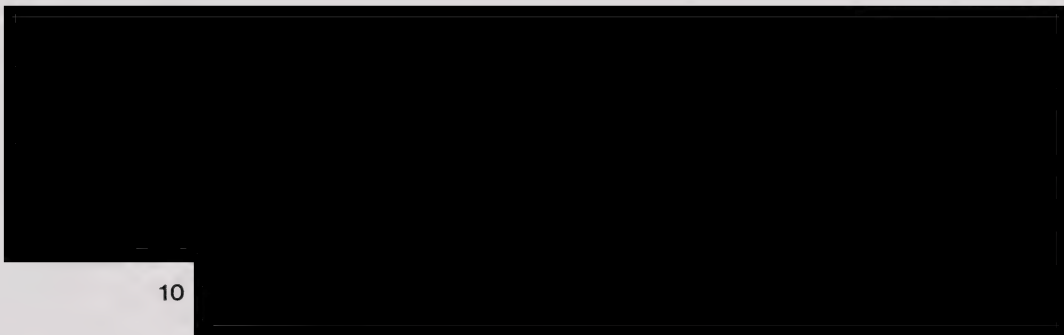
Discussion

It is possible to see a relationship between the Ongare Point bowl, 45316, the Motiti Island bowl, 14015, and the Mangatarata bowl, 45313. All share avian characteristics, yet as in late Maori carving of the *manaia* motif, the avian characteristics are alternated with specifically lizard or human forms and so gradually lose their avian association. The same alternation or replacement can be seen in the figures on the butts of wahaika clubs.

There is no way of determining age for these particular bowls. On the basis of style 45316 would appear to be the earliest in the series, with the unfinished example 14015 belonging to the same group. 45313 is probably later than these two. On the basis of other pieces with strongly Polynesian appearance, a guess date for 45316 and 14015 might be somewhere in the 13th Century A.D. A similar guess for 45313 would place it about the 16th Century A.D.

The other bowls figured do not fit this bird to man pattern but are zoomorphic. In the case of 1197 an animal form is represented, while in 4869 a mixed form with both human and animal characters is reflected. Other such bowls include one in Auckland Museum from Waikaretu, South Waikato (22968) which Stevenson (1939, Fig. 13) suggested "resembles a grotesquely fat animal with small head and a short tail" (1939, p. 206).

It is a moot point whether the head on 22968 in fact represents an animal or a human. Perhaps a parallel with it is to be found in dog-shape bowls. These Skinner illustrated in 1922 (see his Figs. 1-3) where he identified them as of Arawa origin. A dog-shape bowl from the G. Mair Collection now in Otago Museum, is identified by Mair as being that named Potakatawhiti. This is the dog that was eaten by Toi-te-huatahi and led to the Arawa migration to the Bay of Plenty (see Grey 1928, p. 54, as written by Te Rangihauheke), making it appropriate for Arawa chiefs to be served from such bowls. They appear to form a special class of zoomorphic bowls.



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Figs. 10, 11. 4689 Length 66.5cm. Width 19.8cm. Kerepehi. Pres. H. E. Vaile.
10. Top view. 11. Side view.

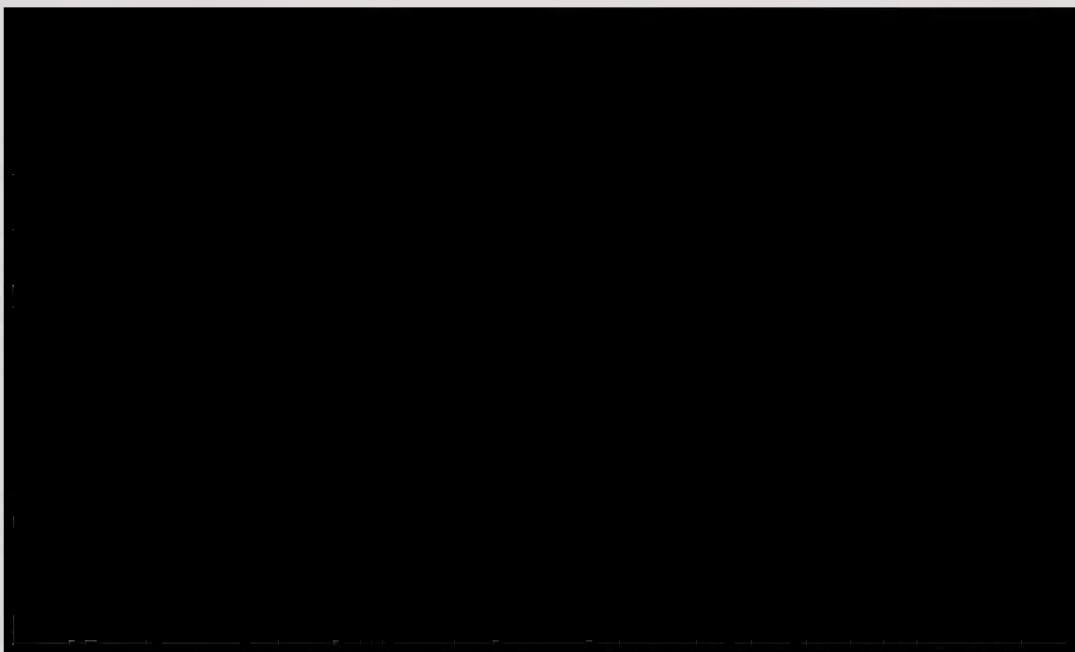


Fig. 12. 44626 Length 125cm. Width 31cm. Kawakawa Bay. Purchased E. E. Vaile.

(Photo: Vahry)

Another zoomorphic form would appear to be that of a lizard as evidenced by bowl 4869 from Kerepehi. This motif may also be the basis of 44626 from Kawakawa Bay. The classic Maori *manaia* form appears to mingle elements of both bird and lizard and it is not unlikely that, given bird-form bowls at an earlier stage, lizard-form bowls should also be present. At present, however, the forms can only be identified as animal rather than bird, and perhaps lizard.

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